

Football fans killed in stadium crush

At least twenty people have been killed during a football match in Ivory Coast. The crush happened at the start of Ivory Coast's world cup qualifying match with Malawi as tens of thousands of people tried to get into the stadium. John James reports:

It seems many fans - some who had tickets but many without - were angry when the **stadium** gates were shut. Police tried to keep the crowds back with **tear gas**, but in the panic the supporters were **crushed** against a wall and **struggled** to escape to safety. The Ivorian Sports minister, Dagobert Banzio, says there seemed to be more people outside the stadium than in it.

Banzio: 'Some spectators who didn't have tickets tried to **force their way in**. Unfortunately they broke down one of the big gates and in the **stampede** people were crushed'.

Those people are now being dealt with in the city's hospitals. The government is promising an inquiry into what went wrong.

Africa **is no stranger to** these kinds of incidents, but this is one of the most serious for several years. The national football association had told those without tickets to stay away, but thousands ignored that message hoping to see Ivory Coast's Europe-based football stars. **The big attraction** was local hero Didier Drogba who missed the previous round of **qualifiers** due to injury. He scored two goals in the five-nil Ivorian victory, but that has now been **overshadowed** by what happened off the pitch.

John James, BBC News, San Pedro

Vocabulary and definitions

stadium	a large enclosed area of land with seats around the sides, often used for sports events
tear gas	a special gas used by some police and armed forces to control crowds of people. It hurts the eyes and causes them to water, hence the name 'tear'
crushed	pushed together very tightly – here, so tightly that some of them died
struggled	tried to do something, but found it difficult, here, they found it impossible
force their way in	use physical strength to gain entry
stampede	when many people or animals suddenly all move quickly and in an uncontrolled way
is no stranger to	has experienced this kind of event before
The big attraction	the main thing or person which people want to see
qualifiers	football matches played in order to get into the main competition (here, the World Cup)
overshadowed	to overshadow means to cause someone or something to seem less important or less happy

More on this story: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7971140.stm>

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2009/03/090330_witn_ivory_page.shtml